

SUPPORTING ENGLISH LEARNERS

English Learners (ELs) make up 9% of the United States' total student population, and America's long-term prosperity is linked to whether these students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge they need for college and careers. ELs face the dual challenges of learning English and learning academic content at the same time. Results from the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress show that ELs achieve at performance levels far below those of their English-proficient peers in mathematics, reading, and science. Moreover, the areas of the country with the greatest increases in the number of ELs are often those that have less experience serving these students, and the Department and its programs play a key role in helping these States, districts, and schools meet the needs of ELs.

- **Dedicated funding for English Learner Education (\$723 million).** The Administration is maintaining its commitment to supporting States and districts in operating high-quality language instruction educational programs by continuing to provide significant formula funding to all States for English Learner Education. This request would also provide continuation grants for the preparation and training of teachers of ELs and would fund evaluation activities and a clearinghouse for the dissemination of research-based information on effective methods, programs, and strategies for ELs.
- **Race to the Top Equity and Opportunity (\$300 million).** This new initiative is designed to aggressively target opportunity and achievement gaps. Building on previous Race to the Top competitions, RTT-Equity and Opportunity (RTT-Opportunity) aims to support, spotlight, and drive systemic changes at the state and local level. Grantees would enhance their data systems to place sharp focus on the districts, schools, and student groups with the greatest disparities in opportunity and academic performance, while also being able to identify the most effective interventions. They would develop thoughtful, comprehensive strategies for addressing these gaps, and use the data to continuously improve. Grantees would invest in strong teaching and school leadership, using funds to develop, attract, and retain more effective teachers and leaders in high-need schools through strategies such as individualized professional learning and career ladder opportunities. States would collect data on school level expenditures, make that data transparent and accessible, and consider strategies to assess and remedy gaps. Participating districts would be required to ensure that their state and local funds are distributed fairly by implementing a more meaningful comparability standards based on this school level expenditure data. Grant funds could also be used, for example, to provide rigorous coursework; improve school climate and safety; strengthen students' non-cognitive skills; develop and implement fair and appropriate school discipline policies; expand learning time; provide mental, physical, and social emotional supports; expand college and career counseling; and identify and carry out strategies that help break up and mitigate the effects of concentrated poverty. The program also will help states and districts to improve the use and effectiveness of resources from other federal programs.
- **School Improvement Grants Program (\$506 million).** The program will continue to fund large-scale grants to districts to implement rigorous interventions in their lowest-performing schools that bring about dramatic improvements in student achievement and school performance. Since 2009, SIG has provided approximately \$5 billion to help turnaround over 1,500 of the nation's lowest performing schools. Approximately 25 percent of the students served in these schools are English Learners. Additionally, the Office of School Turnaround (OST) has worked with the Title III office to develop technical assistance modules that highlight discussions with practitioners and researchers around best practices to support ELs. Throughout 2014, the OST is highlighting promising strategies at the district level for supporting ELs in turnaround schools and will share these practices with other school districts and states.

- **Promise Neighborhoods program (\$100 million).** This program supports projects that significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth by providing a cradle-to-career continuum of ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive education reforms, effective community services, and strong systems of family and community support – with high-quality schools at the center. Grantees will plan and implement these projects for all children and youth in the community, including ELs and their families, and many of the current grantees serve communities with high percentages of ELs.
- **Adult Education State Grants (\$564 million).** These grants support programs that assist adults in becoming literate and in obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency, assist adults who are parents in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children, and assist adults in the completion of a secondary education. During the 2012-2013 program year, 40% of the participants enrolled in a program supported by these grants were enrolled in an English Literacy program. In addition, a \$71 million set-aside supports **English Literacy/Civics Education State Grants** that fund English literacy programs that incorporate civics education. Classes introduce students to civics-related content and provide them with opportunities to apply that knowledge in their daily lives while building their English language and literacy skills. Services address the needs of immigrant and other limited English proficient adults, including high-skilled immigrants with degrees and credentials in their native countries.
- **Strengthening English Learner Education through the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).** The President’s ESEA proposal would strengthen this program by requiring States to implement valid and reliable assessments of English language proficiency, consistently identify ELs, and evaluate the effectiveness of programs for ELs. It would also provide new competitive grants to support innovative, effective, or promising practices, including dual-language programs that promote literacy in both English and students’ home languages.